

Embargoed: 00:01 Wednesday 21 May 2014

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Alone in the crowd Essays on loneliness in a changing society

A new book of essays is to be published exploring how loneliness plagues some of the most vulnerable and marginalised in our society.

The Campaign to End Loneliness and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation have gathered together leading thinkers from across the charity sector to consider how loneliness underpins many of the problems faced by the most vulnerable in our communities.

The collection of essays, '[*Alone in the crowd: loneliness and diversity*](#),' examines how loneliness can perpetuate or aggravate many of the problems faced by those already struggling with cancer, alcoholism, disability, becoming a carer, or living in a care home [1].

The essays argue that unless our society adapts to demographic changes -- such as increased numbers of divorced older people, increasing instances of dementia, greater numbers of older LGBT people and rapidly ageing BME communities -- we may see an increase in loneliness and social isolation.

The collection will be launched at two town hall meeting events, hosted by The Guardian's Public Services Editor David Brindle, on Wednesday 21 and Friday 30 of May at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in London. If you would like to attend please contact the press office for further details.

Kate Jopling, Director for the Campaign to End Loneliness, says: "Loneliness is increasingly being recognised as a major cause of poor health and wellbeing which is costing our health and care services dear. But if we are to tackle loneliness effectively we need to understand the true profile of the lonely population.

"We know that as our population ages many more people are expected to develop dementia, become a carer, or live with a long term disability like dual sensory loss. These are all significant risk factors for loneliness"

"But we will also see significant shifts in the make-up of our older population. Many more people will enter later life single and living alone, there will be more older people from BME communities and a more people entering later life who are openly lesbian gay or bisexual. Without proper effort to understand and respond to the specific needs of these communities, we will continue to see older people feeling marginalised and unsupported.

"Those on the frontline of providing care and support need to start thinking about how they are going to respond to the growing need of many older people for support in

maintaining and in some cases rebuilding their social networks. If they do not, we could end up facing a tide of loneliness that will overwhelm already strained services.”

Andrew Barnett, Director of the UK Branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, says: “Tackling loneliness is highly personal but relevant to society as a whole, complex and not easy to solve.

“We need to be able to reach out effectively to those who are most isolated, working from our understanding of what causes loneliness, what characteristics and which transition points can make people vulnerable to becoming lonely.

“We hope that these essays stimulate new thinking and help us all to consider how to ensure that our response to loneliness meets the needs of those who experience it, in all their diversity.”

The essays in the collection are as follows:

1. Below rock bottom: Older adults and alcohol abuse – Simon Antrobus, Addaction
2. Caring alone – Heléna Herklots, Carers UK
3. Facing the fight alone: Cancer, isolation and loneliness – Ciaran Deváne, Macmillan
4. Going back in: Loneliness and its impact for older lesbian, gay and bisexual people – James Taylor, Stonewall
5. I would be less lonely alone: The loneliness paradox – Ruth Sutherland, Relate
6. Loneliness in care homes – Tom Owen, My Home Life
7. Race is no protection against loneliness – Omar Khan, Runnymede
8. The most terrible poverty: Loneliness and mental health – Paul Farmer & Jenny Edwards, Mind & Mental Health Foundation
9. When friends drop away: the loneliness of living with dementia – Jeremy Hughes, Alzheimer’s Society
10. Without sight and sound: Loneliness among older deafblind people – Richard Kramer, Sense

Extracts from and republication of these essays is possible on request. Please forward requests to the Campaign to End Loneliness press office.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

[1] The Campaign to End Loneliness, ‘Alone in the Crowd: loneliness and diversity’, 21 May 2014, <http://bit.ly/1o1mpuC>

The **Campaign to End Loneliness** is network of local, regional and national organisations and individuals working together through community action, good practice, policy and research to combat loneliness and isolation in the United Kingdom.

The Campaign has five partners who lead the strategic direction of the Campaign: **Age UK Oxfordshire, Independent Age, Manchester City Council, Royal Voluntary**

Service and **Sense**. More information about the Campaign can be found at:
www.campaigntoendloneliness.org.uk

The **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation** is an international charitable foundation with cultural, educational, social and scientific interests. Based in Lisbon with branches in London and Paris, the purpose of the UK Branch in London is to bring about long-term improvements in well-being, particularly for the most vulnerable, by creating connections across boundaries (national borders, communities, disciplines and sectors) which deliver social, cultural and environmental value.